

## State of the Congregation

January 26, 2014

What has been happening since last June? Here are some highlights:

Five MUUC members (Teri Rockwood, gg gordon, Sarah Redmond, Nancy Sullivan, and Barb Michael) traveled to Louisville, Kentucky for our UU General Assembly, bringing back ideas to implement for the benefit of the congregation.

UU minister, Emmy Lou Belcher, visited us from the DuPage congregation in the Chicago area, leading an adult forum and worship service.

Other summer visitors came through our doors, and the Board walked through gg's Wisconsin doors, where we held our annual Board retreat.

Many small group gatherings were held in September led by Kathy & Paul Wright and Joan & Martin Steindler. Lots of questions were answered and ideas were gathered. Quite a few have been implemented...others are long-term goals.

Sarah Redmond, then Megan Foulks, picked up editing *The Chronicle*, MUUC's monthly newsletter. We started a Communications Committee, and in January, hired our first MUUC Admin, Heidi Gould. She is continuing to serve as co-chair with Gail Griffith of the Social Action Committee for her volunteer work for MUUC and the common good.

Tom Sullivan and Sarah Redmond have been revising our website, and Heidi is gearing up to work on that, as well, as we streamline communications through Heidi to avoid overlap and get the word out.

The Board and Social Action Committee acknowledged our concern for UU's becoming more aware of our neighbors across "the pond" (Atlantic and Mediterranean, that is) in Palestine. We voted in favor of endorsing a new UUA Congregational Study Action Issue proposal along with the 1,000+ member UU congregation in Portland, Oregon, as well as other small and mid-size congregations. We made the Oct. 1<sup>st</sup> deadline, and today we have the opportunity to vote on the proposals submitted.

In the fall we held a tour, with Jan Schulz from the Forest Service, of our land surrounding the Meeting House. Heidi Gould followed it up with a report and photos of our flora and fauna on the grounds. Sari Embley offered input regarding what has been done as well as possible future plans.

We've held energy checks of the Meeting House.

We hosted the Interfaith Thanksgiving Service in November.

We became members of Church OnLine through the UU Church of the Larger Fellowship and *Quest for Meaning*.

We now have Wifi at the Meeting House for accessibility to programs (Church OnLine and others), for individual member use, and for quick fact-checking purposes.

We held two very successful fundraisers – one for the Women’s Center and Harbor House and another for Heifer International, hosted by MUUC children and youth.

Adult programming: Dan Redmond organized an MUUC Men’s Group, Ginny Giddings put together MUUC social gatherings monthly calendars, Sarah Redmond started a bi-monthly Buddhist meditation and reading group, a *Soul to Soul* group continued and two new Heart to Heart deep listening covenant groups started in January.

Religious Exploration for children and youth:

- Our first high school Coming of Age group was started, thanks to Teri Rockwood and those serving as mentors. Many of you supported their trip to Appleton to visit a mosque, connect with UU’s, and stop at a Catholic holy site on the way home.
- Our OWL (Our Whole Lives) sexuality program is currently running for middle school-age students with Paul Gray and gg gordon. We are serving more kids from the community than our own UU middle-schoolers.
- The upper elementary kids are delving into ecology topics with Michelle Lexmond.
- Our youngest UU kids are exploring with Laura Nagle, who is pulling ideas from *RE Express* through the Church OnLine program,

Nancy Sullivan has compiled a list of those who have served on MUUC’s Board of Trustees over the years. If you are considering serving, you will soon have a chance to let someone on the Nominating Committee know of your interest.

Tim VanderVeen and Nancy Sullivan have begun potential new member gatherings.

We recently hosted a Room at the Inn training. There are now over 1,000 volunteers in the greater Marquette area who have been trained, which is something for us to consider should we ever decide to host a week here at the Meeting House.

In the immediate MUUC future...

- Two professionals from Lake Superior Hospice are working with Tim VanderVeen for our hosting an “End of Life” workshop next Sunday, Feb. 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- As a Welcoming Congregation, we look forward to holding a U.P. Rainbow Pride Valentine’s Day Dance here at the Meeting House for those who identify as gay, lesbian, trans, bi, queer, and allies. Hope many of you will attend and support this fun, safe event!
- The Keweenaw UU Fellowship is getting a 3/4 time UU interim minister starting in February. Perhaps she will be able to join us on one of her “off” Sundays.
- In April we will be holding a 3-part series book discussion on the “UUA Read,” *Behind the Kitchen Door* by Saru Jayaraman.
- We plan to re-visit creating a special natural space combining a podium, a little grotto for Joys & Concerns pebbles, a place to hold our chalice, etc. The point-persons to share your ideas for this project are Michael Erdmann and Cherokee Helms-Gleason.

A big thank you to each of you for all you have done to not just keep this MUUC ship afloat but to see it charting new waters and when time, sailing that “blue boat home!”

Now to gg for an update on our finances.